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INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
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AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

CONFIDENTIAL KINGSTON 8577

E.O. 12065: GDS 11/19/86 (HAVERKAMP, R) OR-M  
TAGS: PINT, JM  
SUBJECT: PNP BOYCOTTS PARLIAMENTARY SWEARING-IN CEREMONIES

1. (U) ACCORDING TO A NEWS RELEASE FROM THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY (PNP) HEADQUARTERS ON NOVEMBER 17, THE PNP MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO BOYCOTT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT ON NOVEMBER 18 "TO PROTEST THE BRAZEN ATTEMPT TO DEPRIVE DUDLEY THOMPSON OF THE WEST ST. ANDREW SEAT." PNP CHAIRMAN AND FORMER MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY THOMPSON WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED THE WINNER IN THIS CONTEST IN THE PRELIMINARY COUNT ON ELECTION NIGHT, OCTOBER 30; BUT FOLLOWING THE FINAL COUNT, JAMAICA LABOUR PARTY (JLP) CANDIDATE OWEN STEPHENSON WAS GIVEN THE VICTORY. THE PNP EXECUTIVE, IN AN EXCESS OF PARTISAN OVERSTATEMENT, DESCRIBED THIS AS "THE MOST BRAZEN ASSAULT UNDER THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF JAMAICA."

2. (U) THE VOTE IN WEST ST. ANDREW IS NOW SUBJECT TO A MAGISTERIAL RECOUNT AT THE REQUEST OF THOMPSON. THE RESULTS OF WHICH SHOULD BE ANNOUNCED THIS WEEK. MEANWHILE, ATTORNEY GENERAL WINSTON SPAULDING HAS REQUESTED THE SOLICITOR GENERAL TO PETITION THE COURTS TO DECLARE THE ELECTION NULL AND VOID TO FORCE A BY-ELECTION, FOLLOWING CHARGES BY BOTH CANDIDATES OF FRAUDULENT PRACTICES.

3. (C) COMMENT. THE ABSENCE OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY FROM THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONIES SHOULD NOT BE READ AS A REFUSAL TO ASSUME THE ROLE OF THE OPPOSITION. THERE SEEMS TO BE GOOD REASON FOR THE PNP TO OBJECT TO ELECTORAL TRANSGRESSIONS ON BEHALF OF THE JLP CANDIDATE IN THOMPSON'S CONSTITUENCY, AND THE OPPOSITION HAS SEIZED ON THIS TO DRAMATIZE THEIR CASE FOR IRREGULARITIES IN SOME CASES. IT IS MORE LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT THE PNP WISHED TO AVOID THE EMBARRASSMENT OF BEING PRESENT ON AN OCCASION WHICH WAS ESSENTIALLY A CELEBRATION OF THE JLP VICTORY IN THE ELECTIONS, WITH FIFTY OF THE FIFTY-TWO JLP MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE BEING SWORN IN (MFA MINISTER OF STATE GAILLMORE WAS IN WASHINGTON FOR THE OASGA AND THE THOMPSON-STEPHENSON RACE WAS STILL UP IN THE AIR), THE MAJORITY PARTY ELECTING ITS LEADERS IN THE HOUSE (ALBERT FORREST OF WESTERN ST. MARY AS SPEAKER), AND SENATOR OSWALD HARDING BEING SWORN IN AS PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE. PNP MPS AND SENATORS ARE EXPECTED TO BE SWORN IN ON A MORE QUIET OCCASION, PROBABLY ON NOVEMBER 25 WHEN THE HOUSE NEXT MEETS. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION MICHAEL MANLEY (NOW TRAVELLING ABROAD) HAS INFORMED THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE THAT HE WILL BE AVAILABLE TO BE SWORN IN AT THE END OF THE MONTH. ONE SENIOR PNP MP TOLD ENBOFF NOVEMBER 18 THAT THE PARTY IS DECIDING WHICH MPS WILL BE SHADOW MINISTERS FOR WHICH SUBSTANTIVE AREAS, AND ANOTHER SENIOR PNP OFFICIAL, ALSO ON NOVEMBER 18, REITERATED EARLIER STATEMENTS TO ENBOFF THAT THE PNP WILL SERVE AS "THE LOYAL OPPOSITION."

THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED DAILY NEWS, WHICH HAS MAINTAINED ITS BASICALLY PRO-PNP STANCE IN THE POST-ELECTION PERIOD, RAN AN EDITORIAL ON NOVEMBER 18 CRITICIZING THE BOYCOTT. WHATEVER THE REASONS FOR ABSENTING THEMSELVES, THE EDITORIAL STATED, THE PNP MEMBERS HAVE A DUTY TO REPRESENT THE PEOPLE WHO ELECTED THEM.  
LAWRENCE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR  
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